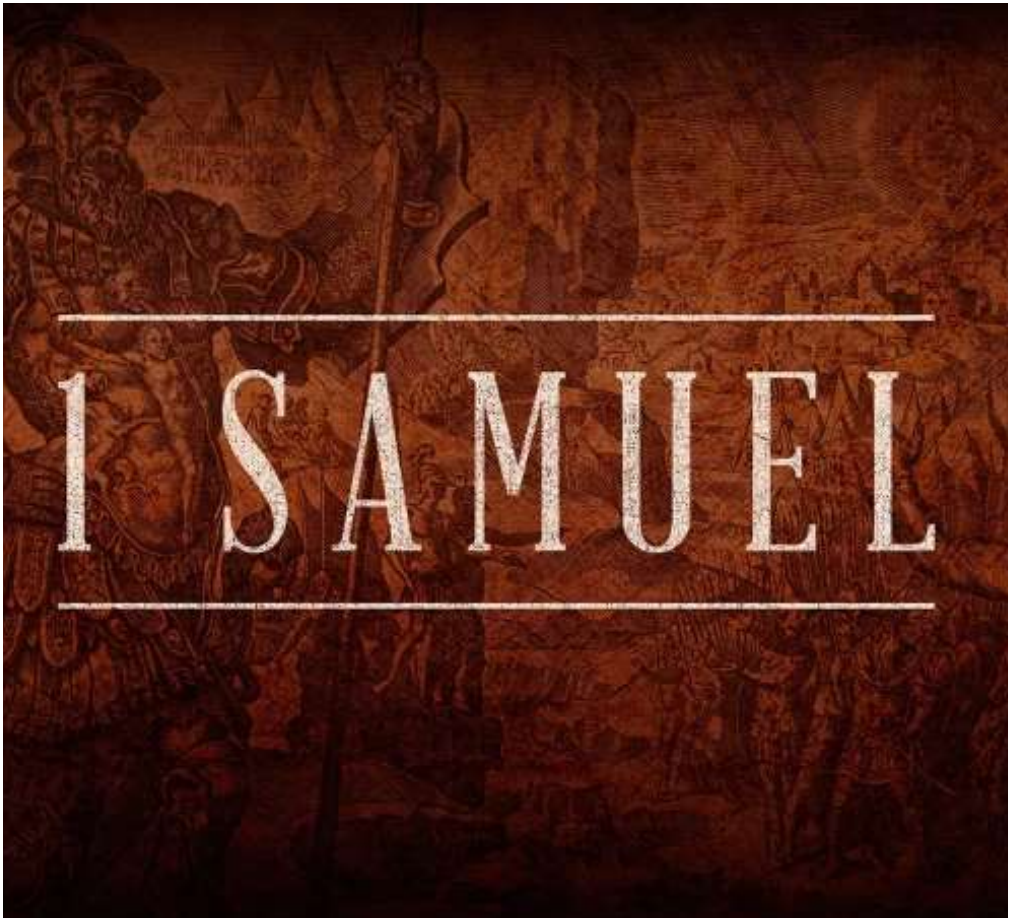


# Let's Worship God

11th-16th May 2020

1 Samuel



# 1 SAMUEL

## **Monday - 1 Samuel 3:1-3 - God's Silence**

In God's people, Israel, there were three great public roles or offices: Prophet, Priest, and King. The holders of these roles were marked out by having oil poured on their head - they were anointed with it. These people were "messiahs" - the Jewish word for "anointed one".

The theme tune of Hannah's prayer in chapter 2 told us that this book was about God raising up an anointed King (2:10). In 2:35 God promised to raise up a Priest. Chapter 3 is about God raising up a Prophet. The prophet received and spoke the Word of God. They didn't speak their own messages, they brought God's words. They didn't just predict the future, like we might think of a prophet, they proclaimed God's message to that time and place. They were the Old Testament preachers: messengers of God.

Chapter three begins with God's silence in v1-3. When we think of the Bible we might think of God speaking to his people as an everyday occurrence. But Israel have had 300 years during the period of the Judges where the word of the LORD was rare and unusual. There were occasionally prophets (see Judges 6:8), but there was no established, authorised, on duty, God-credentialed "prophet in residence". Like there had been when Moses was leader. No-one to teach the people and make God and his ways known to them. God and his people are not really on speaking terms.

God's people have been unfaithful, worshipping other gods and seeking joy, provision, and protection in others. God's not huffing, but in discipline he has withdrawn his voice. His word is a gift, and he removes it. And it's a disaster for his people - remember the last few chapters of Judges?

Eli's physical condition is a metaphor (v2). "He cannot see the light of day, nor the word of God". But there's a flicker of hope - the "lamp of God has not yet gone out" (v3). Eli sleeps "in his own place". Samuel sleeps in the temple, tending the lamp. The light is not yet out, because of Samuel.

### **Questions**

1. Read Proverbs 29:18. How do the days of the Judges illustrate this?
2. How might this judgement of God - the silencing of his voice, show itself in our day?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Ask God to speak loudly and clearly to our time and place.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

“Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.”” 1 Samuel 3:9b

**Praise: Psalm 74:1, 8-11 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# 1 SAMUEL

## **Tuesday - 1 Samuel 3:4-10 - God's Summons**

In loving judgement, God has stopped speaking to his people. In grace he sees their desperate situation, ensnared by the wickedness and hopelessness of idol worship. And so he calls to them - this word dominates this section. God's voice rings out. He breaks the silence. He issues a summons. In these dark days he has been preparing his man, saturating him in his worship, causing him to develop and mature (2:26). Now he is summoned to his service.

Many of us know this story well, it's a Sunday School classic. Have you ever wondered why God has to call him four times? It shows us how rare God's Word was at the time, and how spiritually blind, not just physically blind, Eli was. But more than that: God is underlining the need for us to know him personally. Read v7. Samuel was familiar with religious places, words, and rituals, but was a stranger to God personally and intimately. Samuel is Israel's brightest spark of hope (the metaphor of v3), but doesn't know the LORD (v7). And so he's not equipped to receive God's Word, nor to bring it to others. But what will equip him with the intimate knowledge of God that he needs: God's Word (v7).

In verse 10 the penny eventually drops with Eli and he prepares Samuel to respond to God's summons. When the LORD comes and stands near, calling "Samuel, Samuel," there's an echo of other great moments of God speaking to his people - Abraham and Jacob and Moses. This is the beginning of a new era. Samuel answers as he has been taught (v9-10). "Speak LORD, for your servant hears." This is the response of all who hear the summons of God. This should be our prayer every morning in our personal devotions, in our family devotions, and every time we meet with God's people.

### **Questions**

1. Think back to the last Lord's Day, the last time you were "in the temple of the LORD". You heard God summon you through his Word. What did he say to you and what did he summon you to do?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Ask God for a willing hearing heart like Samuel's (v10). Pray for your ministers to know the Lord more and more, so they might be equipped to speak his words.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

“Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.”” 1 Samuel 3:9b

**Praise: Psalm 50:1-5 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# 1 SAMUEL

## Wednesday - 1 Samuel 3:11-18 - God Sentencing

As Samuel opened the doors of the house of the LORD that morning (v15), he opened them to a new era. God had called and spoken to his prophet. God was now speaking. Samuel's first message as a prophet is not an easy one to deliver. It is of national importance - "everyone's ears will tingle" (v11). God is sentencing the wicked leaders of his people. His mentor, imperfect yet fatherly, will be judged, along with his sons (v13-14). It might seem harsh to us, but one of the repeated lessons of 1 Samuel is that God's leaders have heightened responsibilities to honour him before his people. The greater the height raised, the greater the sin. But the sins of Eli's family are aggravated by something else - it is a high handed, arrogant sin. They have treated with contempt the very offerings intended to remove sin. The very means of forgiveness have been scorned. They've sinned against God's way of dealing with sin. This is the most serious sin. This is the unforgivable sin. You cannot be saved if you reject the way of God's mercy. In today's terms, Hophni and Phineas refuse and scorn the Cross and the Crucified Saviour, Jesus. Anyone who rejects the sacrifice for sin cannot have their sin forgiven. This sin cannot be "atoned for by sacrifice or offering for ever" (v14). This sin leads to punishment for ever (v13). This is deadly serious sin. Yet, don't despair for loved ones who are refusing and scorning the crucified Saviour. We live in a day of mercy. The day of sentencing is future. So keep praying.

But there is also a profound challenge here in Eli's response in v18. It is both resigned ("do what seems right") and submissive ("let him do"). Eli is a complex character, and his response is ambiguous, but he is able to look at this judgement and see it is good in the LORD's eyes. This is the difficult doctrine of the goodness of God. He is good, even in dark providences and plans: the untimely passing of a loved one; his righteous wrath at the sins of a loved one. This is hard. But he is good. Just look to the cross to see that. And remember, we are still in the day of salvation (2 Cor 6:2).

### Questions

1. What areas have you struggled to see or accept the goodness of God in?
2. When does the "day of salvation" end?

### Prayer Points

1. The goodness of God is a difficult doctrine. Take time to pray through it. Acknowledge God's goodness, acknowledge your struggles in accepting the goodness of his plans sometimes, rest your faith at the Cross.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

“Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.”” 1 Samuel 3:9b

**Praise: Psalm 73A:1, 9-10, 15 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# 1 SAMUEL

## Thursday - 1 Samuel 3:10-4:1 - God Speaking: The Pattern

As Samuel opened the doors of the house of the LORD that morning (v15), he opened them to a new day of judgement for Eli's house, but a day of hope for Israel. Because now, God is speaking. It is not simply that he has now spoken to Samuel. He is speaking - 3:19:4-1. There is now a prophet in Israel - a mouth piece of God. God is speaking to Samuel, and Samuel is speaking to the people. Where once there were no visions (3:1) there are now frequent visions (3:21). For the first time since Moses there is an authorised, on duty, God-credentialed prophet-in-residence, bringing God's Word to the people.

This is the start of a new era. God plans to raise up a King to rule, bless, protect, and provide for his people. Samuel will anoint the king (be the king-maker). God is going to do an unspeakable good to his people, and they will enjoy a glorious Kingdom of peace and prosperity. There will be a renewed spiritual life amongst the people too, climaxing in the building of the Temple. How does the glorious new era of blessing begin? God sends a prophet. God sends his Word.

This is the pattern God works to. A prophet precedes a King. A prophet precedes a glorious new kingdom of peace and prosperity. A prophet born to a barren woman of the priestly tribe.

This king (David) and his dynasty would fail to bring full blessing, eternal peace, and ultimate prosperity. But fast forward 1000 years and you see God working to the same pattern. Before he raised up his king from humble beginnings, he sent a prophet to bring his Word to his people. A barren woman of a priestly family, called Elizabeth, gave birth to John. He would declare a message preparing for the coming of the king (Mark 1:2-3). He would anoint the king with water at his baptism. God's plan was to bless his people ultimately with his king, Jesus. And he precedes his king with his prophet. We'll look at the practical lesson tomorrow. But today, just savour the perspective this pattern gives you on Jesus, the true king.

### Questions

1. If the things written above about David's rule of blessing are more true of Jesus than of him, what perspective do they give us on Jesus' rule over us?

### Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that God sends prophets to point the way to his king.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

“Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.”” 1 Samuel 3:9b

**Praise: Psalm 85A:3-4 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

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# 1 SAMUEL

## **Friday - 1 Samuel 3:10-4:1 - God Speaking: The Lesson 1**

Before God sends his king to bless, he sends his prophet to proclaim. That's the pattern we see 1 Samuel. It's the pattern we see when Jesus comes. It is the pattern today. We see in this chapter the importance of a prophet, a messenger from God, bringing his Word of hope and life.

We don't have prophets today who receive the Word of God directly from God, like in Bible times. Jesus is God's final Word (Heb 1:1-2). God has said all he needs to say and all he wants to say in the Bible. But we hear the word of God, just as truly as Samuel did, in the Bible. God speaking to Samuel in this chapter is no more powerful than God speaking to us in the Bible.

The Word of God is powerful. By his Word he created the earth. He simply said "Let there be", and he spoke galaxies into existence. It directs all the affairs of the world. Not a sparrow falls except by his decree. It saves men and women - it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (Rom 1:16). The Holy Spirit works by God's Word.

As we look out on a world in great need, and resolve to bring God's Word to them - in weekly services, in evangelistic meetings, in leaflets - it's not that we have no new ideas. But rather, this is our best idea. This is why our churches emphasises the importance of public, family, and private worship. This is why we encourage you to attend both services, and midweeks. This is what our children need. This is what our unbelieving friends and family need. This is what we need. When God wants to bless his people and his world, he sends his Word.

## **Questions**

1. Are there any areas in your life in which you are losing confidence in the Word of God as our great need and hope?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Ask God to work powerfully by his word in the worries that occupy your thoughts when you've nothing else to think about, the worries your mind defaults to.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

“Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.”” 1 Samuel 3:9b

**Praise: Psalm 29:1-2, 6 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# 1 SAMUEL

## **Saturday - 1 Samuel 3:10-4:1 - God Speaking: The Lesson 2**

This chapter shows us the priority of God's Word. God sends his prophet to speak for him before he sends his king to save and bless. It's not a priority of value, but a priority of time. It was the case in 1 Samuel. It was the case at the start of the gospels. It is the case in our day. He is still working to this pattern. What do we mean by that? In one sense God's true saving king has already come. But he's coming again, to complete the salvation of his people (Phil 1:6), raising their bodies, finally defeating and judging evil, bringing them to be with himself. Before the king comes again to finish his salvation, he has sent his messengers into all the world with good news. The prophets still precede the king.

Samuel's ministry was both a message of judgement (on Eli's house) and a message of hope (to Israel that their God had turned his face towards them again). God's Word still brings a message of judgement and hope through his messengers. We need those messengers, desperately. We need modern day prophets, preachers called and equipped by God. Men who the LORD is with and who the LORD lets none of their words fall uselessly to the ground. This is the great need of the hour. Not a vaccine, not economic stimulus. Not great displays of miraculous power. But preachers of God's Word. Paul understood this clearly: read Romans 10:12-17.

Therefore we need to pray for prophets (preachers). We need to pray for those students in training. We need to pray for more men to enter training. We need to think long and hard as Deacons, Elders, and Presbyters, as to where our money goes. Do we pour our resources into buildings or preachers? £300,000 on a building project, or 10 years of a preacher? What is our calculation? Conversely, if we can look at our denominations and communities and see a steady stream of men provided as preachers, we have great grounds for thanksgiving and believing God is at work.

## **Questions**

1. Do we really believe in the priority of prophets, and that preachers have beautiful feet (Rom 10:15, poetic language for valued and welcomed work)? Is it reflected in our prayers for them, and our attitude towards them?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Give thanks for God's supply of preachers. Pray for many many more.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

“Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.”” 1 Samuel 3:9b

**Praise: Psalm 22 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

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